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Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition (AMMC)

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U.S. Marine Mammal Commission Annual Meeting 2014

What is AMMC?

- Coalition of the five arctic marine mammal hunter/co-management groups:
 - Alaska Beluga Whale Committee
 - Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission
 - Alaska Nanuuq Commission
 - Eskimo Walrus Commission
 - Ice Seal Committee
- Established in 2012 in response to a specific request from the U.S. Coast Guard District 17

AMMC Communities



AMMC Purpose



- ▣ To facilitate communication and education between arctic coastal communities and the USCG, NOAA, and other regulatory agencies on issues related to the expected impacts of increased ship traffic in the Arctic on our way of life and subsistence activities.

AMMC Observers

- ▣ Regional organizations that participate in AMMC deliberations.
 - North Slope Borough
 - Northwest Arctic Borough
 - Kawerak, Inc.
 - Inuit Circumpolar Council
- ▣ Provide coordination with their own activities.
- ▣ Provide greater linkages for the AMMC into the broader indigenous community regarding threats.

How AMMC is funded and managed



- ▣ Small foundation grant
 - Two meetings per year
- ▣ Annual rotating chairmanship
- ▣ First (and current) Chair: Willie Goodwin, Alaska Beluga Whale Committee
- ▣ Two individuals who largely volunteer time to act as staff.

AMMC History

- ▣ First Meeting March 2012 Meeting (Anchorage, AK)
 - ▣ Status of arctic shipping & projections for the future
- ▣ Subsequent Meetings:
 - ▣ September 2012 (Bowdoin College, ME)
 - ▣ June 2013 (Anchorage, AK)
 - ▣ February 2014 (Washington, DC)
 - ▣ Planned: October 2014 (Juneau, AK)
- ▣ Meeting Reports Available on Request

AMMC Accomplishments

- ▣ Joint letter to USCG's 17th District defining hunters' concerns (USCG response January 2013)
- ▣ Very positive relationship with USCG District 17
- ▣ Subsistence use areas added to 2013 Coast Pilot
- ▣ Developing relationships with Alaska Marine Exchange and NOAA's Office of Coast Pilot
- ▣ Working with D17 and AMEX to initiate Arctic Harbor/Waterway Safety Committee

Harbor/Waterway Safety Committee

- Will provide a forum to meet with shippers and vessel operators to work out voluntary measures for sharing the waterway
- These measures become input for the USCG as it seeks to manage and ensure safety for arctic waters
- Model Concept: AEWAC Conflict Avoidance Agreement (CAA): annual meetings of hunters and oil and gas stakeholders to develop voluntary mitigation measures
- H/WSC measures can be factored into foreign vessel “Voyage Planning”

Critical Initial Mitigation

- Reliable Communication Network
 - Alaska Marine Exchange is working with communities to set up Automatic Information System (AIS) receivers to monitor ship traffic from villages
 - Combine/build on communication network set up under CAA
 - AIS will greatly enhance safety on the water for hunters

Importance of AMMC

- ▣ It is critical that hunters' voices are given a prominent place in discussions on how activities in the Arctic are to be regulated. It is a constant concern
 - ▣ New activities can affect our food security
 - ▣ Poorly designed regulation of marine mammal subsistence hunting threatens our food security

Broader Importance of AMMC



- ▣ Subsistence hunter groups and regional stakeholders are coming together to address a new activity that could affect marine mammal subsistence hunting for all Arctic coastal communities.
- ▣ Provides a larger voice and better chance of being heard.

Regulatory actions & our villages

- Conservation groups and federal agencies react to changes in the Arctic by seeking tighter regulations on our food gathering
- Outcomes of climate change on marine mammal resources cannot be predicted
- Regulatory actions can lead to food shortages, create fear and insecurity in our communities.
- International Whaling Commission (IWC)
- New action on polar bears
- Walrus and Ice Seals next?

AMMC Long Term Goal

- ▣ Rational Regulation of arctic shipping
- ▣ Through sound, peer reviewed science, informed by the traditional knowledge and continuous observations of our hunters

Thank you.

